

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



Commencement Bay / Thea Foss & Wheeler-Osgood Waterways — Tacoma, WA
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region January 2004

Final Designs Approved for Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways

The Thea Foss Waterway is being addressed by two groups. Private utility companies are cleaning up about 20% of the Thea Foss Waterway. The City of Tacoma, with contribution from other entities, is cleaning the rest. This fact sheet describes cleanup activities currently under way, being led by the City of Tacoma and the utilities.

EPA approved the City of Tacoma's design for an \$88 million cleanup on November 10, 2003. Sixty-nine organizations contributed \$13.1 million.

CITY CONTRACTORS WILL DREDGE SOME 525,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways.

Dredging at the head of the St. Paul Waterway is under way to make room for the contaminated sediment at a confined disposal facility (CDF) (see map, p.2). Some of the clean sediments dredged from the top 8 feet of the St. Paul will go to the Puget Sound Dredge and Disposal Analysis (PSDDA) site in Commencement Bay.

Most of the remaining 350,000 cubic yards will go to the northwest side of the Puyallup River Delta (see map, p.2) to improve conditions for aquatic life. Throughout the waterways, rocks will be placed along banks to add stability. Work should be completed by early 2006.

Caps will contain remaining contamination at Thea Foss

A total of 21 acres will be capped in the Thea Foss Waterway with sand, silt, and rock to keep pollution from mixing with the water. In an area in front

(continued on p.2)

Private utility companies are working together at the head of Thea Foss Waterway, north of the SR-509 bridge.

THE AREA AT THE HEAD OF THE THEA FOSS WATERWAY is being cleaned up by two utilities: Puget Sound Energy and PacifiCorp. Remediation started in mid-September, 2003, and will be completed by February 14 of this year.

That construction effort will:

- Dredge and dispose of 7,500 cubic yards of sediments near the outfalls.
- Cap one underwater area with an innovative 70-by-75-foot heavy plastic layer to keep remaining contaminants from reaching clean areas.
- Install a continuous clean layer of soil over the rest of the head of the waterway to cap underwater sediments, and add an underwater retaining (sheet-pile) wall for stability between the capped area and the City's cleanup efforts further to the south.
- Place durable material in front of the City's twin 96-inch storm drains to avoid "scouring" of the waterway bottom and protect the cap.
- Reduce shoreline slopes and add beach area on the east side of the waterway, helping mitigate environmental impacts.

Caps will contain remaining contamination

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of Alber's Mill, a different cap will be built with a grout mat. This cap works like a concrete pillow at the bottom of the waterway.

It is made of two layers that get pumped with concrete, somewhat similar to an air mattress filled with air. The grout mat will confine contaminated sediments underneath clean soil.

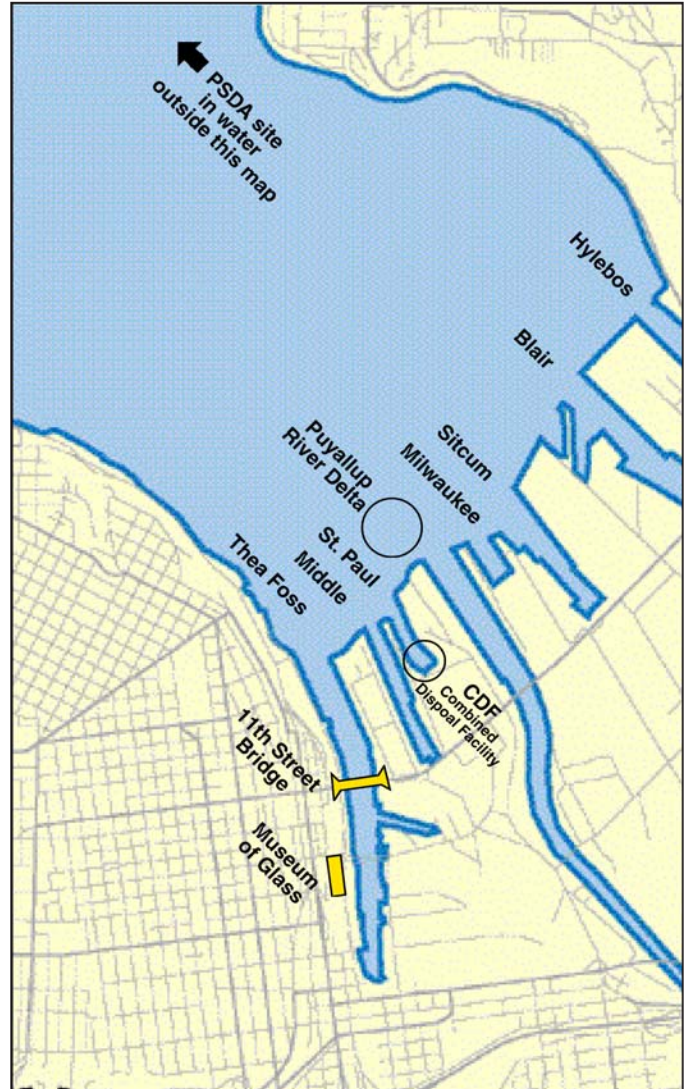
Marinas will be relocated to provide access for cleanup crews

Boats from four marinas in the Thea Foss will be temporarily relocated to a new marina that will be built early in 2004 in front of the Museum of Glass. The relocation is needed to accommodate cleanup crews during excavation and capping of the sediments under the existing marinas. Relocation of the marinas will be staggered as the work progresses.

To enhance the natural recovery of waterway channel areas north of the 11th Street bridge (see map), some small amount of natural materials may be added to serve as a cap. Other areas will be left to recover naturally, with no addition of material. All areas will be monitored regularly to ensure that contamination is decreasing over time. If these areas do not improve over time, they will be dredged or capped.

Wildlife habitat will be improved

To compensate for unavoidable environmental impacts caused by the cleanup, improvement to wildlife habitat is required throughout the Thea Foss Waterway and in other locations within the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats Superfund site. Several pocket beaches are being enhanced in the Thea Foss Waterway. For these beaches, slopes are softened to create a better environment where aquatic life can flourish. However, the bulk of modification is being conducted in the St. Paul Waterway, in the Middle Waterway, and at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' levee in the Puyallup River (see map). These projects provide about 12 acres of mitigation and are designed to enhance aquatic habitats by providing more vegetation in riparian areas, mudflats, and marshes.



The City of Tacoma and private utilities are cleaning up Thea Foss and Wheeler-Osgood Waterways

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

EPA: 1-800-424-4372

24-hour Foss Cleanup Hotline: 253-233-1995

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NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Copies of the plans are available to the public at:



Tacoma Public Library — Main Branch
1102 Tacoma Ave. South
Northwest Room
Tacoma, Washington
253-591-5666

Citizens for a Healthy Bay
917 Pacific Avenue, South 406
Tacoma, Washington
253-383-2429

Environmental Protection Agency
Superfund Records Center
1200 Sixth Avenue, 7th Floor
Seattle, Washington
206-553-4494

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<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r/10/cleanup.nsf/sites/cbnt>

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Thea Foss & Wheeler-Osgood Waterways

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